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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/845,396	04/30/2001	Wayne L. Randell	32423/82536	2724

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EXAMINER

LIVERSEDGE, JENNIFER L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3692

DATE MAILED: 12/04/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/845,396

Applicant(s)

RANDELL ET AL.

Examiner

Jennifer Liversedge

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 September 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 48-116 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 48-116 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date May 18, 2006 and June 13, 2006 4/30, 2001
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

This Office Action is responsive to Applicant's amendment and request for reconsideration of application 09/845,396 filed on September 5, 2006.

The amendment contains new claims: 48-116.

Claims 1-47 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 48-116 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Patent No. US 6,826,542 B1 to Virgin et al (further referred to as Virgin).

Regarding claims 48-71, Virgin discloses a process for online invoice presentment and processing (columns 1-14; particularly column 3, lines 52-58), comprising:

a) generating at a biller entity an invoice for a service rendered to a customer entity (column 3, lines 54-56; Figure 4);

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b) making information on the invoice electronically available to first and second users associated to the customer entity (column 2, lines 43-49; column 10, lines 25-56);

c) transmitting over a communications network from the customer entity to the biller entity information indicating that the first user has approved the invoice and that the second user has authorized payment of the invoice (column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);

including enabling users to approve and authorize the invoice based on respective invoice handling privileges assigned by the customer to the user (column 10, lines 32-56; column 11, lines 6-23; column 13, lines 21-36);

wherein the first and second data elements are transmitted to the biller entity in response to the first and second users approving and authorizing the invoice (column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);

where an identifier is processed to determine if users have invoice approval and authorization privileges (column 11, lines 6-23);

transmitting over the communications network from the second customer computing unit to the biller entity payment remittance information including data selected from the set consisting of a credit card number, an authorization to debit a bank account, wire transfer information, direct deposit information and an indication that a check will be mailed (Figure 11; column 14, lines 48-54).

Regarding claims 72-96, Virgin discloses a process (columns 1-14), comprising:

a) rendering a service to a customer entity (column 1, lines 21-28);

- b) generating an invoice for the service (column 3, lines 54-56; Figure 4);
 - c) making available to first and second users associated to the customer entity an electronic document providing information on the invoice (column 2, lines 43-49; column 10, lines 25-56);
 - d) providing in the electronic document a user interface control, the user interface control providing a first input option to approve the invoice and a second input option to authorize payment of the invoice, the second input being distinct from the first input option (column 2, lines 43-61; column 10, lines 27-56; column 11, lines 6-23; column 13, lines 21-36);
 - e) detecting granting of payment of the invoice only when the first user has approved the invoice via the first input option and the second user has authorized payment of the invoice via the second input option (column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);
- including enabling users to approve and authorize the invoice based on respective invoice handling privileges assigned by the customer to the user (column 10, lines 32-56; column 11, lines 6-23; column 13, lines 21-36);
- invoice information includes an invoice identifier and amount of money billed under the invoice and where a complete copy of the invoice can be accessed (Figure 11; column 14, lines 48-54)
- where an identifier is processed to determine if users have invoice approval and authorization privileges (column 11, lines 6-23);

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transmitting over the communications network from the second customer computing unit to the biller entity payment remittance information including data selected from the set consisting of a credit card number, an authorization to debit a bank account, wire transfer information, direct deposit information and an indication that a check will be mailed (Figure 11; column 14, lines 48-54);

wherein the invoice is associated with a given category selected from a plurality of categories, the invoice handling privileges assigned by the customer entity to the first user being associated with respective categories and including invoice approval privileges with the given category (column 2, lines 5-16 and lines 43-49; column 10, lines 27-56; column 11, lines 6-23; column 13, lines 10-36).

Regarding claims 97-112, Virgin discloses a process for granting payment of an invoice over a network, the invoice having been issued by a biller entity to a customer entity (columns 1-14; particularly column 3, lines 52-58), said process comprising:

- a) accessing via a computer information on the invoice (column 3, lines 52-58);
- b) transmitting from the customer entity to the biller entity a first data element indicating that the invoice has been approved by a first user associated with the customer entity (column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);
- c) transmitting from the customer entity to the biller entity a second data element indicating that payment of the invoice has been authorized by a second user associated with the customer entity (column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);

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where an identifier is processed to determine if users have invoice approval and authorization privileges (column 11, lines 6-23);

transmitting over the communications network from the second customer computing unit to the biller entity payment remittance information including data selected from the set consisting of a credit card number, an authorization to debit a bank account, wire transfer information, direct deposit information and an indication that a check will be mailed (Figure 11; column 14, lines 48-54);

wherein the invoice is associated with a given category selected from a plurality of categories, the invoice handling privileges assigned by the customer entity to the first user being associated with respective categories and including invoice approval privileges with the given category (column 2, lines 5-16 and lines 43-49; column 10, lines 27-56; column 11, lines 6-23; column 13, lines 10-36).

Regarding claims 113-115, Virgin discloses a method for electronically presenting and granting payment of invoices (columns 1-14; particularly column 3, lines 52-58), comprising:

a) generating at a biller entity an invoice for a service rendered to a customer entity (column 3, lines 54-56; Figure 4);

b) making information on the invoice electronically available to the customer entity (column 3, lines 54-62);

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c) enabling at least two users associated to the customer entity to complete respective stages of a multi-stage invoice handling process (column 2, lines 5-16 and lines 43-54; column 10, lines 25-56; column 11, lines 6-23);

d) transmitting over a communications network from each of said at least two users to the biller entity a respective data element indicating that the respective stage of the multi-stage invoice handling process has been completed (Figure 11; column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);

wherein the multi-stage handling process includes a first and second stage, the first user transmitting over the communications network to the biller entity a first data element indicating that the first stage has been completed and a second user transmitting over the communications network to the biller entity a second data element indicating that the second stage has been completed (column 2, lines 43-59; column 14, lines 20-59).

Regarding claim 116, Virgin discloses a process (columns 1-14), comprising:

a) generating by a biller entity an invoice for a service rendered to a customer entity (column 3, lines 54-56; Figure 4);

b) making available to first and second users associated to the customer entity an electronic document providing information on the invoice (column 2, lines 43-49; column 10, lines 25-56)

c) providing in the electronic document a user interface control, the user interface control providing a first input option to approve the invoice and a second input option to

authorize payment of the invoice, the second input being distinct from the first input option (column 2, lines 43-61; column 10, lines 27-56; column 11, lines 6-23; column 13, lines 21-36);

d) notifying the biller entity when the first and second users have been selected to indicate that the first and second users have approved the invoice and authorized payment of the invoice, respectively (Figure 11; column 2, lines 43-61; column 14, lines 20-59);

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 48-116 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

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extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Jennifer Liversedge whose telephone number is 571-272-3167. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Chilcot can be reached at 571-272-6777. The fax number for the organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Jennifer Liversedge

Examiner

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RICHARD E. CHILCOT, JR.
SUPERVISOR, PATENT EXAMINER